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February 10, 2009

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"The primary focus of our meeting with President Obama today was the importance of long term fiscal reform," said Rep. Charlie Melancon, Blue Dog Co-Chair for Communications. "After eight years of reckless fiscal policies and out-of-control deficit spending, we have found ourselves buried under a mountain of debt that has left our country vulnerable on a number of levels. It is encouraging to have a President who is committed to developing a realistic plan to restore the fiscal health of the country, and the Blue Dogs look forward to being partners with President Obama in his efforts."

"I regard President Obama's willingness to meet with the Blue Dogs as a positive sign that he is truly on board with our goal to address our nation's mounting debt," said Rep. Baron Hill (D-IN), Blue Dog Co-Chair for Policy. "Yes, we need to address our immediate economic problems, but we must also look long term and return to budgeting principles, such as statutory PAYGO, that led to surpluses in the 1990s."

"We appreciated the opportunity to talk with the President today about the Blue Dogs' long-term fiscal priorities," said Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D-SD), Blue Dog Co-Chair for Administration. "I'm optimistic that the Blue Dogs will continue to work with the President in a strong partnership to ensure that the federal government has the kind of long-term budget enforcement tools that are necessary to reduce our national debt and stabilize our economy in the long run."

"I am encouraged by today's meeting and the Blue Dogs look forward to working closely with President Obama to return our nation to a path of fiscal responsibility," said Rep. Heath Shuler (D-NC), Blue Dog Whip.

"As a Freshman, I know one of the reasons I'm standing here is because I pledged to my district to advocate fiscal responsibility and common sense spending," said Rep. Frank Kratovil (D-MD), a newly elected member of the Blue Dog Coalition. "We now have an obligation to work with the White House and follow through on that promise by restoring fiscal discipline. Our party's ability to succeed in districts like mine rests on our credibility on this critical issue and our ability protect constituents from another economic crisis down the road."

"The previous administration inherited record budget surpluses and turned them into record deficits, doubling the national debt our children will have to pay back with interest," said Rep. John Tanner (D-TN), a founding member of the Blue Dog Coalition. "The Blue Dogs are ready to work with the new administration to turn our long-term budget around so that our country has to depend less on borrowed money from other countries."

"We are facing some of the most difficult economic times this country has seen," said Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-CA). "As a Blue Dog Democrat, I and others feel it is absolutely imperative that we move now to take care of the long-term financial health of the federal government. I am grateful that we had an opportunity to share our goals with President Obama."

The fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition was formed in 1995 with the goal of representing the center of the House of Representatives and appealing to the mainstream values of the American public. The Blue Dogs are dedicated to a core set of beliefs that transcend partisan politics, including a deep commitment to the financial stability and national security of the United States. Currently there are 49 members of the Blue Dog Coalition. For more information, visit the Blue Dog Website at <http://www.house.gov/ross/BlueDogs/>.

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